Photograph a historic site, help Wikipedia, and win a prize. Participate in the world's largest photography competition this month!
Learn more

Wishbone (TV series)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

- Production
  - Development
  - Casting
  - Filming
- Release
  - Home media
- Reception
  - Awards
- *Wishbone* in other media
  - Books
  - Video games
  - Film adaptation
  - Others
- See also
- References
- External links

Wishbone is an American live-action children's television series that aired from 1995 to 1997 and originally broadcast on PBS. It is about a Jack Russell Terrier dog named Wishbone who daydreams about being the lead character of stories from classic literature.

The show was produced by Big Feats! Entertainment, a division of Lyrick Studios, which also produced *Barney & Friends* for PBS. Unlike Barney, *Wishbone* was targeted towards an older demographic ages 6 to 11.[2] The adapted stories were notable for staying faithful to the source material, and not toning down their subject matter like murder, execution, suicide, and the effects of slavery.[3]

Wishbone	
Genre	Children's fantasy Comedy Education
Created by	Rick Duffield
Starring	Soccer the Dog Jordan Wall Adam Springfield Christie Abbott Mary Chris Wall Angee Hughes Julio Cedillo Mikaila Enriquez Paul English, Jr.
Voices of	Larry Brantley
Theme music composer	Tim Cissell (music and lyrics) Lynn Adler (lyrics)[1]
Opening theme	"What's the Story, Wishbone?"[1]
Ending theme	"What's the Story, Wishbone?" (instrumental)
Composer	Tom Merriman
Country of origin	United States
Original language	English
No. of seasons	2
No. of episodes	50 (list of episodes)
Production	
Executive producer	Rick Duffield
Production locations	Plano, Texas Allen, Texas[1]
Running time	30 minutes
Production company	Big Feats! Entertainment[1]
Original release	
Network	PBS
Release	October 8, 1995 – December 7, 1997
Related	
Wishbone's Dog Days of the West	

Premise [edit]

A standard episode of *Wishbone* consists of an opening scene, introducing a contemporary plot in Wishbone's hometown of Oakdale. Something about the situation reminds Wishbone of a famous work of literature, which he introduces to the viewer. The episode then cuts between an adaptation of that work, usually with Wishbone portraying the main character, and the contemporary plot. Occasionally, Wishbone will play a secondary character if the lead role is female (in *Joan of Arc*, he plays Louis de Conte) or difficult to relate to (he plays Sancho Panza in *Don Quixote*). The development of the contemporary plot parallels that of the literary work, particularly in their dénouements.

The last two minutes of nearly every episode are a behind-the-scenes featurette titled "Tail Ends", narrated by Wishbone and focusing on a production department whose work was particularly prominent in the episode, such as lighting for "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" or make-up for *Frankenstein*.

Episodes [edit]

Main article: List of Wishbone episodes

Season	Episodes	Originally released	
		First released	Last released
1	40	October 8, 1995	December 1, 1995
2	10	October 15, 1997	December 7, 1997
TV movie		March 13, 1998	

Cast [edit]

- Soccer the Dog as Wishbone (Larry Brantley as the voice of Wishbone)
- Jordan Wall as Joseph "Joe" Talbot, Wishbone's young owner
- Christie Abbott as Samantha "Sam" Kepler, one of Joe's best friends
- Adam Springfield as David Barnes, one of Joe's best friends
- Mary Chris Wall as Ellen Talbot, Joe's widowed mother
- Angee Hughes as Wanda Gilmore, the Talbots' eccentric neighbor
- Joe Duffield as Damont Jones, a school bully
- Jarrad Kritzstein as Jimmy Kidd (season 2), Damont's obnoxious younger cousin
- Julio Cedillo as Travis del Río (season 2), the owner of the local sporting goods store
- Mikaila Enriquez as Melina Finch (season 2), Travis' niece
- Paul English, Jr. as Marcus Finch (season 2), Travis' nephew

Recurring cast [edit]

- Bob Reed as Walter Kepler, Sam's father and the owner of the local pizza parlor
- Alex Morris as Nathaniel "Nathan" Barnes, David's father
- Maria Arita as Ruth Vincent Barnes, David's mother
- Jazmine McGill as Emily Barnes (season 1), David's rambunctious younger sister
- Brittany Holmes as Emily Barnes (season 2)
- Rick Perkins as Bob Pruitt (season 1), the kids' English teacher and later Wanda's boyfriend
- Justin Reese as Nathanael Bobolesky (season 1), a nerdy classmate
- Elena Hurst as Amanda Hollings (season 1), Sam's nemesis
- Taylor Pope as Curtis (season 1), Damont's sidekick
- Codie Elaine Oliver as Robin, another friend of Joe's
- John S. Davies as Mr. King, an obnoxious businessman
- Adan Sanchez as Dan Bloodgood (season 2), the mail carrier

The Wishbone Players [edit]

- Amy Acker (season 2)
- Brent Anderson
- Jonathan Brent
- Sharon Bunn
- Christopher Carlos
- Chamblee Ferguson
- Shea Fowler
- Sonny Franks (season 1)
- Lisa-Gabrielle Greene (season 1)
- Dee Hennigan
- Sean Hennigan
- Billy Eugene Jones
- Lynn Mathis
- Randy Moore (season 1)
- Joe Nemmers
- Kevin Page
- Jenny Pichanick
- Jeanne Simpson (season 1)
- Cliff Stephens
- Matt Tompkins
- Jenni Tooley (season 2)
- Sally Nystuen Vahle

Notable guest cast [edit]

- Jensen Ackles as Michael Dunn, Ellen's protégé ("¡Viva Wishbone!")
- Melissa Archer as Sarah Johnson, a classmate on whom David has a crush ("A Bone of Contention")
- Shelley Duvall as Renee Lassiter, a sculptor ("Groomed for Greatness")
- Irma P. Hall as Dr. Thelma Brown, a former Oakdale resident ("Digging Up the Past")
- Jerry Haynes as Hubert Lassiter, a kind man who rescues a lost Wishbone ("Golden Retrieved")
- Daryl Johnston as himself, a former football player ("Moonbone")
- Cody Linley as Andrew, one of Ichabod Crane's students in Wishbone's telling of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" ("Halloween Hound, Part 1")
- Marco Perella as Seymour LaVista, a TV commercial producer ("Rushin' to the Bone")

Production [edit]

Development [edit]

Wishbone was conceived by Rick Duffield after brainstorming with his staff about "making a show for kids that was told from a dog's point of view".[4] Following several iterations of this idea, including one in which the dog loved music and another in which he brought good luck (hence the name Wishbone), Duffield hit on the idea of Wishbone imagining himself as heroic figures from literature.[5] His eventual goal was "an entertaining way for kids to get their first taste of great books".[6]

Casting [edit]

In the summer of 1993, Duffield spent three days casting for the dog star at a motel courtyard in Valencia, California, looking at between 100 and 150 dogs.[6] After filming a seven-minute pilot which captured Wishbone's character and suggested the show's format, he presented it to PBS.

Larry Brantley, the voice of Wishbone, was cast following "a five-minute impromptu audition" in which he imagined Wishbone's thoughts as Soccer "was obsessing, like, over this tennis ball".[7]

For the literary scenes, the producers created a repertory company of local stage actors, dubbed The Wishbone Players.[5]

Filming [edit]

Wishbone's exterior shots were filmed on the backlot of Lyrick Studios' division Big Feats! Entertainment[1] in Allen, Texas, and its interior shots were filmed on a sound stage in a 50,000-square-foot (4,600 m^2) warehouse in Plano, Texas. Additional scenes were filmed in Grapevine, Texas.[*citation needed*]

Duffield told *Entertainment Tonight*:

> "Keeping up with the variety in the series is the biggest challenge. Because Wishbone is the central figure of each show and plays an integral role in the contemporary story and the literary story, he's in almost every scene. So he has a lot to do and designing scenes that can work with a dog, with period actors and period sets, as well as kids in a contemporary world is a big challenge."[6]

Each episode of Wishbone cost around $500,000 to produce.[8] Almost all of the budget (excluding $1 million provided by PBS via a license fee) was provided out of pocket by Richard Leach and was subsided by the success and popularity of Lyrick's flagship show, Barney & Friends.[5][8]

Despite acclaim from critics and educators, only 50 episodes were produced. The first 40 episodes were shown as a single-season run in 1995, while the remaining ten episodes became the second season in 1997–1998. Duffield told author Michael Brody that PBS halted production because the show did not have "merchandising potential".[9]

Release [edit]

The series aired on PBS and premiered in the United States on October 8, 1995. The final episode aired on December 7, 1997. After the series ended, reruns continued to air until August 31, 2001. The series returned in reruns on PBS Kids Go! on June 2, 2007. *Wishbone* clips came to the PBS Kids Go! website. The return to PBS lasted a short time, although some PBS stations continued to air *Wishbone* until October 7, 2013.[10]

The show also aired on Nickelodeon in the UK and Ireland and on Nine Network in Australia.

Home media [edit]

Several episodes were released on VHS between 1995 and 1998.

In 2004, HIT Entertainment released four episodes on individual DVDs: "Hot Diggety Dawg", "The Impawssible Dream", "The Hunchdog of Notre Dame", and "Paw Prints of Thieves". These were then compiled into a single DVD released in 2011.

Reception [edit]

This show garnered particular praise for refusing to bowdlerize many of the sadder or more unpleasant aspects of the source works, which usually enjoyed a fairly faithful retelling in the fantasy sequences. [*citation needed*]

Awards [edit]

> This section needs editing to **comply with Wikipedia's Manual of Style.** Please help improve the content. *(August 2023)* (*Learn how and when to remove this message*)

- Academy of Television Arts & Sciences First Honor Roll of Children's Programming, 1999
- George Foster Peabody Award, 1998[11]
- Emmy Award – Art Direction/Set Decoration/Scenic Design, 1997[12]
- Emmy Award – Costume Design/Styling, 1997[12]
- Emmy Award – Graphics and Title Design, 1997[12]
- Emmy Award – Costume Design/Styling, 1996
- Emmy Award Nominations, 1998, "Wishbone's Dog Days of the West"
- Directing in a Children's Special
- Art Direction/Set Decoration/Scenic Design
- Main Title Design
- Costume Design/Styling
- Television Critics Association – Best Children's Show, 1996 and 1997

Wishbone in other media [edit]

The TV movie *Wishbone's Dog Days of the West* was aired on PBS stations on March 13, 1998, and released to video on June 9, 1998.

Books [edit]

Main article: List of Wishbone books

The TV series inspired several book series including *Wishbone Classics*, *Wishbone Mysteries*, and *The Adventures of Wishbone*. Altogether, more than fifty books have featured Wishbone, which continued to be published even after the TV series ended production.

Video games [edit]

> This section **needs expansion**. You can help by adding to it. *(August 2023)*

There were also multiple video games based on the series in 1996 and 1997, such as *Wishbone Activity Center*, *Wishbone Print Tricks*, *Wishbone and the Amazing Odyssey*, and *Wishbone Activity Zone*.

Film adaptation [edit]

> This section **needs expansion**. You can help by adding to it. *(August 2023)*

On July 15, 2020, it was announced that Universal Pictures and Mattel's film division are developing a film adaptation of the series. Peter Farrelly will produce the film while Roy Parker will write the screenplay and Robbie Brenner will executive produce. It will be the first theatrical collaboration between Universal and Mattel and the ninth Mattel Films project in development.[13][14]

Others [edit]

In 2021, *Wishbone* was spoofed in the stop-motion parody TV series *Robot Chicken* episode (S11E11) "May Cause Episode Title to Cut Off Due to Word Lim" voiced by Breckin Meyer, where Wishbone plays the role of Anastasia Steele from the erotic romance novel *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

See also [edit]

- *Barney & Friends*
- *Kidsongs*
- *The Puzzle Place*
- *Groundling Marsh*

References [edit]

1. ^ [a] [b] [c] [d] [e] "Frankenbone". *Wishbone*. Season 1. Episode 17. Event occurs at 26:40. Archived from the original on October 22, 2020. Retrieved January 24, 2016.
2. ^ " 'Wishbone' Introduces Kids to the Classics". *Chicago Tribune*. New York Daily News. December 8, 1995. Retrieved March 28, 2025.
3. ^ Rubino, Stef (July 16, 2022). "There Will Never Be Another Wishbone". *Autostraddle*. Archived from the original on January 23, 2025. Retrieved March 28, 2025.
4. ^ Eskin, Blake (October 21, 2009). "The Exchange: Rick Duffield". *The New Yorker*. Retrieved August 8, 2018.
5. ^ [a] [b] [c] Wallace, Christian; Cardenas, Cat (October 2020). "Top Dog: An Oral History of 'Wishbone' ". *Texas Monthly*. Archived from the original on September 20, 2020. Retrieved October 6, 2024.
6. ^ [a] [b] [c] "On Set with Wishbone – Interview with "Wishbone" Executive Producer Rick Duffield". *Entertainment Tonight (archived on The Texas Archive of the Moving Image)*. 1995. Retrieved August 9, 2018.
7. ^ "On set with Wishbone – Interview with Larry Brantley, the Voice of Wishbone". *Entertainment Tonight (archived on The Texas Archive of the Moving Image)*. 1995. Retrieved August 9, 2018.
8. ^ [a] [b] "Dog Days: An Interview with Mo Rocca". *Los Angeles Review of Books*. June 24, 2022. Archived from the original on February 24, 2024. Retrieved March 28, 2025.
9. ^ Brody, Michael (January 16, 2013). *Seductive Screens: Children's Media—Past, Present, and Future*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. p. 73. ISBN 9781443845823. Retrieved August 10, 2018.
10. ^ "What's on: IdahoPTV Kids and Family (Idaho Public Television)". Archived from the original on January 29, 2014.
11. ^ " 'Ellen' Wins Peabody Award". *The New York Times*. Associated Press. April 3, 1998. ISSN 0362-4331. Archived from the original on October 10, 2017. Retrieved October 10, 2017.
12. ^ [a] [b] [c] Variety Staff (May 11, 1998). "PBS early Daytime Emmy leader". *Variety*. Archived from the original on September 27, 2017. Retrieved October 10, 2017.
13. ^ D'Alessandro, Anthony (July 15, 2020). "Universal & Mattel Developing 'Wishbone' Feature Based On PBS Jack Russell Terrier TV Series; Peter Farrelly Producing". Deadline Hollywood. Archived from the original on July 15, 2020. Retrieved July 15, 2020.
14. ^ Bumbray, Chris (July 15, 2020). "What's the story Wishbone? A feature film is in the works". JoBlo.com. Archived from the original on July 16, 2020. Retrieved July 15, 2020.

External links [edit]

- *Wishbone* at IMDb
- Interviews on the set of Wishbone at the Texas Archive of the Moving Image

V · T · E **TCA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Youth Programming** [show]

V · T · E **Former PBS Kids original programming** [show]

Categories: 1995 American television series debuts | 1997 American television series endings | 1990s American children's comedy television series | American children's adventure television series | American children's education television series | American children's fantasy television series | American English-language television shows | American television shows based on children's books | English-language education television programming | PBS Kids shows | PBS original programming | Peabody Award–winning television programs | Reading and literacy television series | Television series based on classical mythology | Television series by Mattel Television | Television shows about dogs | Television shows filmed in Texas | Television shows set in Texas | Television shows adapted into novels | Elementary school television series

This page was last edited on 5 July 2025, at 04:13 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policy About Wikipedia Disclaimers Contact Wikipedia Code of Conduct Developers Statistics Cookie statement Mobile view

a WIKIMEDIA project Powered by MediaWiki